

USERS' NEWS

APRIL, 1981

VOL. 2, NO. 3

TRS-80 BEATS ENIAC

The TRS-80 has done it again. It has shown that it can do things as well as.....if not better than....the "Big Boys".

Trade publication COMPUTER WORLD, recently reported that the TRS-80 came out on top in a contest with ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer). Eniac was the world's first large-scale computer.

Recently students from the University of Pennsylvania proved that the TRS-80 could beat the Eniac in certain situations.

The students used sections of the original Eniac and a TRS-80 to run a program to square all integers from one to 10,000.

The results were surprising. It took Eniac six seconds to complete the task. The TRS-80 only took one-third of a second to do the job.

The Eniac was originally built in answer to a need to speed calculations required to improve the accuracy of

artillery during World War II.

The contest between the TRS-80 and Eniac was held during the celebration of Eniac's 35th anniversary which was held in Philadelphia this month.

Eniac weighed 30 tons, occupied 15,000 sq. ft. of space and cost about \$ 4,000,000.00 to build in 1945.

Eniac was comprised of 18,000 vacuum tubes which used up 150 kilowatts and could do 5,000 calculations per second.

While the TRS-80 will continue to be used, the Eniac remains a historic landmark, hidden out of sight in storage in the Smithsonian Institution.



NEXT MEETING

Date: APRIL 1, 1981

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

Program: Using Time Saving Subroutines by ROYCE BORDMAN

Basic "Basic" by KIP BARTMAN

Computer Crypt

Analysis by RICHARD FLORES

String Handling by DON PATTON

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Program Review

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TRS-80 is a trademark of Tandy Corp.

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT.....BY BILL YOUNG

My column this month spotlights "Special Interest Groups". Special interest groups are not new to our club. We had a group that met weekly to study assembly language programming. That group seemed to be quite successful.

My suggestion is that we need more special interest groups actively functioning within our club. Many possibilities come to mind for special interest groups: computer education, business users, group programming projects, hardware projects, Model II owners, Model III owners, modem users, beginner programming, Adventure addicts, game contests (ie. Galaxie Invasion), ham operators, etc....

At the regular meeting we will pass around a list of possible groups and anyone interested in participating will be asked to put their name and phone number on the list. After the meeting, each group will be asked to meet in a certain portion of the room, group leaders can be chosen and a meeting time and place determined.

At the May regular meeting, we can report on the special interest groups and their activities. If we get together in small groups with other people sharing a common interest, we can all benefit more from our computer club experiences.

I feel that one meeting a month is not enough. I would like to get together with other computer people weekly, or at least every other week. Special interest groups would give people like myself an opportunity to get together more often and gather more information and develop more expertise.

Etc.

If you have an Epson MX-70 or MX80, it is possible that you have a defective ROM. To check this out, run the following test program:

```
10 LPRINT CHR$(27)"1"  
20 LPRINT STRING$(80,"H")
```

If the H's look funny, contact the place where you bought your printer, or send the hard-copy example to Epson.

A new, improved ROM may be available by the beginning of April.

80-COMPUTER USERS OF HOUSTON meets the first Wednesday of each month. Anyone interested in TRS-80 microcomputers is welcome to join our group. Membership dues are \$ 5.00 per calendar year, which includes your subscription to **USERS' NEWS**.

USERS' NEWS

EDITOR: Brigitte Schaefer
PRODUCTION: John Schaefer
THE PROGRAM DOCTOR: E. Wood
A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT:
Bill Young
TAPE LIBRARY: Floyd Atkinson
NOTES FROM COMPUSEIVE:

Ben Taylor

* * *

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The following was printed in March issue of Northern Bytes, which is published by Microcomputer Users International of Saulte Ste. Marie, Michigan. USERS' NEWS exchanges newsletters with MUI and a few of our members read this and felt it should be in USERS' NEWS. This was originally from the AMATEUR COMPUTER GROUP OF NEW JERSEY and was written by PETER A. STARK.

...As a hobbyist and user, as well as a software author and vendor, I would like to add my thoughts on the topic (of SOFTWARE PIRACY) to those expressed in the (ACGNJ News) issue.

Many of the sentiments expressed regarding the legality of copying software are quite valid; I feel, however, that there is another side to the story that also needs telling.

Imagine this situation: You are about to buy a new car. Before selling it to you, however, the salesman makes you agree to the following provisions:

1. You cannot take it out for a test drive.
2. When you "buy" the car, you are getting possession but not title; the car remains the property of the manufacturer, who grants you a license to use the car as long as you want.
3. If the car doesn't work, you can't return it.
4. You can't take pictures of the car or its components.
5. Only a single driver is allowed to use it; you cannot lend it to your friends.
6. When you are finished with it, you cannot sell it.
7. The car is guaranteed to run, but not guaranteed to take you where you want to go.
8. If the car doesn't perform properly, the manufacturer may - or may not - correct the problem.
9. If correction of the problem involves buying a later model of the car, you are expected to do so.
10. If another user of the same model discovers a defect, the manufacturer will not advise you about it until you too discover the same defect.
11. No service manual is available; repairs are at your own risk.
12. The principles of operation of this car are completely different from all other cars; service information on other cars will not help you in any way to repair this car.
13. No replacement parts are available.
14. The hood is sealed; if you try to open it, the engine will self-destruct.

Now comes the clincher - would you buy a car under these conditions? Of course not! And yet, many software vendors ask you to buy their software with exactly the the same strings attached.

They do so, of course, with the explanation that they must do this to prevent their property from being stolen. In order to avoid being victimized, they are instead victimizing the legitimate purchaser. The legitimate purchaser is prevented from fixing defects or adapting the product to his specific needs, prevented from making legitimate backups, even prevented from recouping at least some of his investment when he no longer needs the product.

There is a further aspect to this. It is relatively easy to evaluate a hardware product. When you buy a printer or disk drive, you can investigate the reputation of the manufacturer. It is difficult to manufacture printers or disk drives in your garage - if you buy such a product, you know that someone, somewhere must have made at least a half-serious effort to produce a worthwhile product.

You can try out a printer - if it prints, it prints.

Even if you later discover some problem which you did not anticipate, the chances are good that with just a bit of work you can fix the problem, or at least adapt the device to some less exacting task. At the very worst, you can sell it or donate it to charity.

None of this is true with software. There is no way to evaluate it without extensive use. If it doesn't do your job, even extensive rework may not make it do anything useful to you. And the reputation of the vendor is nothing - no investment is needed to produce software in someone's cellar.

You can look at it another way: How many people do you know who have bought one printer (or memory board or CPU) after another, until they find one that does their job? Not many, I bet. But how many people do you know who have five Basics, or four different chess games, or three different disk operating systems? And are still looking for the one that will do their job right? There are a lot of people who buy several versions of some software item until they find the right one - or until they give up and make do.

one recurring theme in the articles in the ACMU News was that software copying is cheap; the reason nobody copies hardware is because it is expensive to do so. What everybody is missing in this - it costs the manufacturer just as much to make the copy as it costs the original!

When a hardware manufacturer sells you a \$ 100. piece of hardware, he paid perhaps \$ 70. or even more for a copy. So when you pay \$ 100. or \$ 70. worth of stuff to hold in your hand, you feel that you got your money's worth.

But when a software manufacturer sells you a \$ 100. program, you are only getting, perhaps \$ 10. worth of disk or cassette and paper. When you pay \$ 100. for something which has an incremental cost to the manufacturer of \$ 10., then it's hard not to feel cheated.

Ah, I hear you say, he's forgetting development cost. No, I'm not. My feeling is that it costs the hardware manufacturer more money to design a product, build a production line, order and stock an inventory of parts, layout printed circuit boards, provide documentation, package and ship a piece of hardware than it costs the software production houses to write a program and run off copies on a computerized duplicating machine. The difference is that on a \$ 100. order, the hardware vendor makes a gross profit of \$ 30. while the software vendor makes a gross profit of \$ 90.

Copying is a risk that the software vendor takes on willingly. It is simply the price he pays for the fact that he is in a business where he can sell \$ 10. worth of paper and plastic for \$ 100. or more. Only if his sales go down by 2/3 as a result of copying, does he make less than if he were manufacturing comparably priced hardware. But I bet that sales do not go down that much.

I strongly suspect that for every software copier who would have otherwise bought a product, there is somewhere another person who bought the software, tried it out for an hour or two, decided it didn't do what he was led to expect, and put it on the shelf to lie there forever.

This is compounded by the prices of some software. When you buy a \$ 100. circuit board or \$ 300. printer, you intend to use it a lot. Over the life of it you expect to get your money's worth. But when you buy a \$ 100. disassembler, how often will you use it and why? Many users will use it just a few times - probably to fix a bug in some other vendor's software. Hardware gets used a lot; with the exception of a few items, most software does not.

When a hardware manufacturer prices a product, he considers several factors: amortizing development costs over a reasonable number of sales, paying for the production of each item, and achieving a price in balance with the customer's perception of the value of his product. No customer will pay hundreds of dollars for something that contains \$ 5. of parts. The hardware vendor knows this, and prices his product accordingly. Clearly a complex piece of hardware which is continuously plugged into a user's system will be perceived as having more value than a program, however good, which spends most of its time on the shelf.

The problem is that software vendors generally do not consider the value to the customer. They often price a product so the first batch of sales provides a reasonable return on time spent, and the remaining sales are "pure gravy". Because of market pressures - and the need to conform with a customer's sense of the value of a product - hardware manufacturers take a gamble. If they sell only a few items they lose a lot of money, if they sell a lot they make money. Software manufacturers don't want to take that gamble. Many price their product so that if they sell just a few they break even, and if they sell a lot they make a mint.

And the customers know this and don't like it.

And there lies the crux of the problem - copying exists because there is user dissatisfaction. Every one of us has gotten stuck with some useless piece of software.

At Star-Kits, I have formed a very simple policy. With one exception (a \$ 5. game which we offer as a bonus), every piece of software comes with full source code either in the manual or on disk. We send free updates to our customers so they can modify their own programs. And if a customer wants a refund shortly after buying one of our programs, all we ask is that he sign a statement that he has not kept a copy of the program or manual. In all the time we have been in business, we have had one such return (from a customer who did something very shady to boot. But we refunded his money anyway). I think there would be less copying if all software vendors had a similar policy.

If there is a minority of people who steal our software by copying it, so be it. That's the risk we took when we went into the business of selling a \$ 2.50 diskette and 30 sheets of paper for \$ 40.

There are many reasons why copying is attractive to otherwise honest people - it's obviously not a clearcut right/wrong issue. Rather than condemning software copying altogether, you would gain much more user support and acceptance for a "code of ethics" something like this: If you copy it, do so only to try it out. If you wind up liking it and using it, then buy your

PRODUCT AVAILABILITY--

NOTES FROM COMPUSERVE--

Tandy Corp. reports an error in regard to their new direct-connect Modem which is advertised as 300 or 600 Baud. During the final testing stage of the Modem, Tandy found an unacceptable error rate at 600 Baud, so that mode was eliminated. The Modem is 300 Baud only.

* * *

Tandy again reminds the Model I owners that Tandy has "absolutely NO intention of discontinuing support for the Model I." Tandy plans to support the Model I as long as market demand justifies the production of their products. Tandy does want everyone to be aware, though, that Tandy will not make all items for the Model I forever, but it does not plan to stop anytime soon.

* * *

For those who haven't heard yet, the subscription rate for the Tandy newsletter is now \$ 12.00. Send your check or money order for a subscription to:

MICROCOMPUTER NEWS
P.O. Box 2910
Ft. Worth, Tx. 76101

* * *

Model III 4k Level I--
about 60 days behind
schedule.

Model III 32k, 2 disk--
about 90-120 days after
order placed

Daisy Wheel II printer--
about 60 days behind
schedule

Daisy Wheel II Tractor
Feed--about 4 month
delay due to backlog of
their supplier

Model III Disk--about
3-4 week delay

Line Printer VI--about
45 day delay

Color Computer 16k w/
Extended Color Basic--a
delay of about 45 days

Videotex Terminal--30
days behind schedule

LAST MEETING

At the last meeting Bill Neville spoke about APL. He also showed the membership attending graphic samples from his new Epson printer.

Kip Bartran continued his explanation of Basic.

Ben Taylor spoke about MicroNET, including Compuserve and Microquote.

Bill Young explained machine code sort, N-String Search and Binary Search.

Some 60 people attended the meeting, with about 40% of our membership attending.

BRING A FRIEND TO THE
NEXT MEETING!

MAY ISSUE DEADLINE IS

APRIL 15.

CLASSIFIED ADS--

FOR SALE---2 Siemens 40
track floppy drives
with case and cable....
\$ 500.00 for all. Used
only 6 months.....Call
Larry Shaefer..667-6610

* * *

FOR SALE-----Centronics
730 (LP11) printer.....
\$ 500.00....Used only 6
months.....Call Larry
Shaefer...667-6610

* * *

FOR SALE--Suggart SA901
8 inch drives..\$ 300.00
each. Call Larry Shaefer
at 667-6610.

* * *

WANT TO BUY-----TRS-80
Model I, Level II with
16k or larger memory...
Call R. D. Maynard at
Park Plaza Hospital....
527-5160.

* * *

LOOKING FOR---

David House needs someone to assist him with Basic programming, but not in Assembly Language. He also wants to get together with someone who uses Exatron Floppy. Call David at 522-9850.

* * *

MEMBERS---Don't forget
this column is F R E E
for you to use on a non-
commercial basis. If
you have something for
the CLASSIFIED ADS, drop
it in the submission box
at the next meeting or
mail it to USERS' NEWS.

PROBLEMS WITH YOUR BASIC PROGRAMS? Ask the PROGRAM DOCTOR for help. Send your programs on cassette or printed list for testing. The PROGRAM DOCTOR will also try to help with other system programs and answer programming questions.

This month the Program Doctor was asked to help solve a problem given to him by Bill Loeser. Bill had a program that would build a file and save it to disk. There was a menu which gave the various options of working with the file. Bill was wanting to add items to a previously created file, but he would end up only saving the new file items and wiping out the previous file. The problem boiled down to not having an option to add new file items.

Below is a list of the statements in the portion of the program concerning the menu which I changed.

```
85 PRINT "TO EXIT FROM PROGRAM TYPE 7
90 INPUT Q ON Q GOTO 100,200,300,400,500,600,700
```

I changed it to this:

```
85 PRINT "TO ADD TO THE FILE TYPE 7
88 PRINT "TO EXIT FROM PROGRAM TYPE 8
90 INPUT Q:ON Q GOTO 100,200,300,400,500,600,700,800
```

This added an option for adding to the file and added an additional line number to branch to.

Line number 700, which had been branched to for an exit from the program becomes the branch for adding to the file. This line had been: 700 END.

It was changed, and other lines were added:

```
700 INPUT "WHEN READY, HIT ENTER (TO CLOSE THE FILE TYPE 999 FOR NAME)";X
705 P1=P1+1
710 FOR I=P1 TO 50:CLS:PRINT "ENTER NAME (LAST FIRST USE NO COMMAS)
712 PRINT "THEN HIT THE 'ENTER' KEY";:INPUT N$(I)
715 IF N$(I)="9999" THEN P1=I-1:GOTO 750
720 INPUT "ENTER ADDRESS";A$(I)
721 INPUT "ENTER ZIP CODE";Z$(I)
730 INPUT "ENTER PHONE #";P$(I)
735 IF FRE(XS)<100 GOTO 750
740 NEXT I
750 PRINT "FILE CLOSED--";INPUT "TO SEE MENU, HIT ENTER";X
760 GOTO 20
```

Naturally I needed a line 800 to branch to for an exit from the program, so I added: 800 END

These additions followed the same practices of the then current program. P1 is a counter of the number of file items and is the first item on the file as it is saved or input. Currently the file is limited to 50 names & addresses. Line 735 checks on free memory. This change requires that the file have been input before any additions are attempted.

This is not how I would have modified the program for my own use, nor is it exactly like Bill has it now. I have helped him make other changes to this since we made these initial changes.

MICRONET SPECIAL.....

The following is submitted by B.C. Taylor. This is from A.C. McFarling and has been reprinted with permission from McFarling and Apparatus.

Before there was NEWDOS 2.1, NEWDOS PLUS, or NEWDOS80, there was TRSDOS. As all who have used it know, it was not perfect, it had problems. What piece of complex code doesn't. The person who became the author of NEWDOS 2.1 became involved in writing code for microcomputers as an aside to his profession of writing systems for giant mainframes. He chose the Radio Shack TRS80 and TRSDOS to use for his program development.

Having lengthy experience with sophisticated mainframes and software, he became dissatisfied with TRSDOS as it was with its built in errors, et al. So, for his own use in program development, he went through it and corrected the things he did not like. The RS Editor/Assembler with its tape based storage, was too slow and he reworked it, again for his own use. Some time later, the president of a new company called Apparatus, after much pleading, persuaded the author to make his enhanced version of TRSDOS available to Apparatus for release. It was cleaned up a bit, some radically new conventions restored to more usual conventions, a display crediting the original code to Randolph Cook prepared, and documentation written. Note! Until the release of NEWDOS 2.1 with the credit to Mr. Cook, almost no one knew who had authored TRSDOS. The documentation released with 2.1 was actually a compilation of the author's handwritten notes to himself.

With the release of NEWDOS 2.1 went the admonition to the user that he must purchase TRSDOS (if he did not already have it) in order to obtain the balance of the documentation with which to operate it. Actually, TRSDOS was not sold but given away with the computer so any user with a TRS-80 should have had a copy of TRSDOS. The documentation supplied with NEWDOS 2.1, documented ONLY the changes made to TRSDOS.

Later still, utilities were written and a copy of the modified EDITOR/ASSEMBLER were added and made available as NEWDOS PLUS. Again, there was no documentation of the Editor/Assembler beyond the use of the changes made to the original, and again, the user was told in writing, that he must purchase Radio Shack's Editor/Assembler in order to utilize the modified version.

MICRONET SPECIAL CONT.

On June 18, 1980, Apparat released NEWDOS80, written by the same person. This time, this operating system was not a rework, nor modification of anything written by anyone. It was a new operating system for the TRS-80. It was authored by one person, the code was entirely original, and it was completely documented as such. Since that time the author has written a massive amount of new code, much of which may never be released, as it was written by the author for the author's own use. There is in existence a new Editor/Assembler far superior to anything now released anywhere, written for the author's own use. It too will probably not be released. Note: Certain utilities included with NEWDOS80 were NOT written by the author. The L/C Driver was, of course written by Thomas Price Jr. The ASPPOOL utility was purchased from its author and modified. And of course the EDITOR/ASSEMBLER, and the DISASSEMBLER are the same modified versions offered with the earlier 2.1 version.

One final point: the author's desire for anonymity. Some authors want their name in large letters on anything they produce. Some have said it was a matter of pride. So be it. Some of these same authors have expressed virulent anger as a result of being swamped with calls for help, requests for personalization of code, etc. and may have good cause to regret the publicizing of their authorship. The author of NEWDOS80 desires to remain anonymous because he is not bothered by the telephone and may devote his time to writing new code and correcting errors in that previously written. He is reached easily with valid information or problems through Apparat. His phone does not have to be unlisted and his friends may call him by looking up his number in the telephone directory. Nothing sinister, just a simple desire for personal privacy. Who writes code for IBM, GM, XEROX, MICROSOFT, DIGITAL RESEARCH, RADIO SHACK, etc? These companies don't tell you and I doubt if anyone even asks.

I hope this will fill in some of the blanks about Apparat.

A. C. McFarling

PROGRAM REVIEW.....BY ROBERT EDEN

RSM is a program that lets the user explore all aspects of machine language except assembling. It's great if you're interested in the ROM, a machine language program, or just want to learn about computer machine language's inner workings.

The following is a review of RSM commands:

- A - ASCII dump of memory
- B - addition/subtraction in hex and conversion to decimal
- C - verify's a tape made in RSM's own format
- D - hex dump of memory
- E - memory editor
- F - search for 1 byte
- G - jump to memory location
- H - search for a 2 byte number (address)
- I - initialize and input from port
- K - keyboard echo....perfect for printer comments
- L - loads and executes a RSM format program
- M - block move
- O - output to port
- Q - compute checksum of memory block
- R - read RSM format from tape
- S - symbolic cump....a DISSASSEMBLER!
- T - test memory block
- V - block memory compare
- W - write an RSM format tape
- X - exchange memory blocks
- Z - block fill (zero memory)

RSM 2/2D additions

- @ - breakpoint
- P - write system tape (Level II format)
- R Ø - read a system tape and tell name and execution address
- L - load disk sectors into memory
- \$ - write memory to disk sector
- Y - TRS232* parameters
- used instead of 'ENTER'; directs output to printers*

*The TRS232 printer is an interface that uses the cassette ear plug to operate a printer (RS-232 compatable). Also, all printing is sent to the Centronics Parallel port.

I have used RSM to examine numerous programs and have learned much by using RSM. I have also used RSM to make back ups of many programs and hard copies of source code listings. Advantages of RSM---printer option great for disassembled listings...totally ROM independent..No ROM routines used! RSM's main disadvantage is it has poor cassette read..(just load from Basic then return). RSM works on the Model III except for the cassette and printer routines. RSM is made by Small Systems Software and marketed by a number of sources.

By MIKE HUNT

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.....

In the February, 1981 issue of 80 MICROCOMPUTING, Director of Computer Merchandising for Tandy Corp., Ed Juge, dispelled the rumors that Tandy Corp. was planning to protect TRSDOS. Juge noted that computer users can back TRSDOS up for personal use as often as the user wished; however, the user must remember that TRSDOS is copyrighted. Juge gave the name and address of the person to whom users should write for information on how to sell the user's original software creation on a TRSDOS disk. **USERS' NEWS** wrote to Tandy Corporation's Staff Attorney, G.V. Pack, who sent the following reply:

**Tandy Corporation**

Executive Offices 1600 One Tandy Center Post Office Box 17180 Fort Worth Texas 76102 Telephone (817) 390-3700

February 17, 1981

Brigitte A. Schaefer, Editor
USERS' NEWS
 P.O. Box 20000 #220
 Houston, Texas 77025

Re: Use of TRSDOS
 File RL87/301

Dear Ms. Schaefer:

In response to your letter of February 8, 1981, I wish to advise you of Tandy Corporation's policy on reproduction of the TRSDOS or Radio Shack software. This software was developed internally by Tandy Corporation and is regarded as copyrighted material. Current policy is not to grant any licenses for duplication of this software. However, for those who wish to include the TRSDOS program or Radio Shack software on software they sell, the following alternatives are available:

1. Purchase Radio Shack floppy disk with the TRSDOS or Radio Shack program pre-recorded thereon, add the additional software, and then resell each disk with both the TRSDOS and the newly recorded program.
2. Obtain a disk from a TRS-80 computer owner which has the TRSDOS on it, and then transfer your program to the owner's disk.
3. Sell your program on a disk without the TRSDOS and provide instructions for merging the TRSDOS and your program onto one disk.

If you plan to sell large volumes of the combined software, and plan to purchase the TRSDOS diskette in volume, discounts on the software can be obtained. Please contact Mr. C. Kanouf, Special Marketing Group, 1600 One Tandy Center, Fort Worth, Texas 76102. Also, the enclosed copy of our Tandy Corporation guidelines for trademark usage should help you in your advertising and product labeling, and the enclosed copy of our Computer Sales Agreement shows license particulars.

If you so desire, you may reproduce this letter in your users' group newsletter.

Thank you for your interest in Radio Shack and Tandy Corporation and for contacting us in this matter.

Very truly yours,

Gary V. Pack
 Gary V. Pack
 Staff Attorney

GVP:ce
 Enclosures

Anyone have additional questions about selling any software on a TRSDOS disk may direct them to Mr. Pack at 1600 One Tandy Center, Ft. Worth, Texas, 76102.

I went to one of our local computer stores last month and purchased two games by AVALON HILL. They were PLANET MINERS and B-1 BOMBER. They cost me \$ 15. each plus tax. I went home and opened up the plastic wrapped boxes and found one cassette and a legal size piece of paper with the instructions and some literature about other games from the manufacturer.

I read the instructions and loaded PLANET MINERS. The game was very disappointing. It had very limited graphics and the action was very slow. I felt it had little, if any, challenge for an adult, but might have been o.k. for a 4th or 5th grader for about 2 hours. The documentation was excellent, if not overdone.

As with PLANET MINERS, the documentation for B-1 BOMBER was very good. The game itself was another matter. It had no graphics at all. It would scroll up as if it were for an old computer with a teletype printer. The game was very slow paced because it was written in Basic. There are some good games that use Basic very well, however these two games do not.

I feel that there aren't very many good points to these two games. They come in a very large box with bright colors and very good pictures which seem to promise a game with action and graphics. I feel that this is misleading. I would not recommend these games at the \$ 15.00 price. If they were about \$ 5.00, they would be worth the money. Do not buy games by the same company unless you see them demonstrated on a TRS-80. I feel you are buying the packaging and advertising and not the game themselves.

EDITOR'S COMMENT....

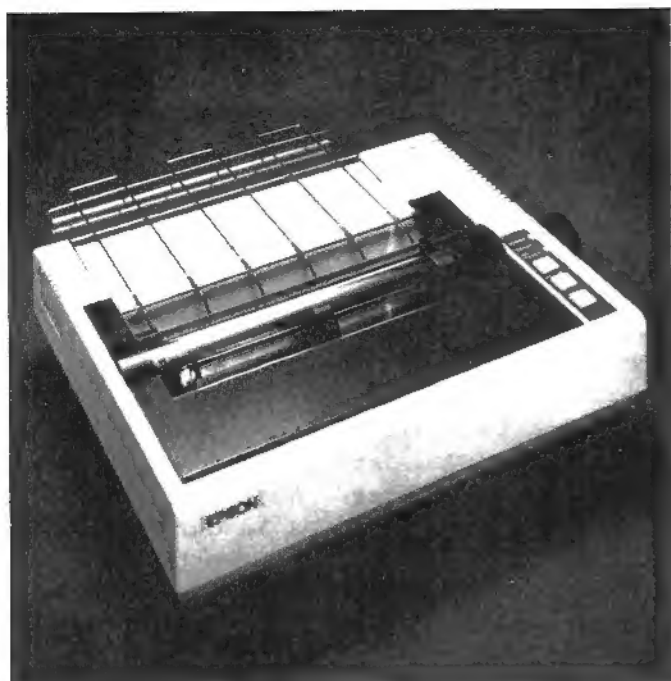
You will notice in this issue of USERS' NEWS an item reprinted from the newsletter published by a users group with which 80-COMPUTER USERS OF HOUSTON exchanges newsletters. Since I became Editor, this is the first item USERS' NEWS has wholly reprinted from another group's newsletter. I want to warn you that from time to time, USERS' NEWS will do so. I, and the previous Editor, Ben Taylor, have reminded members at the meetings to be sure to look at the exchange newsletter notebook; however, to date, very few of our members have bothered to read the newsletters, much less glance through the notebook. Remember how our President, Bill Young, stressed in our last newsletter that we should "share our knowledge and experiences"? Although he was referring to sharing by presenting a program at a meeting, I feel we should "share our knowledge and experiences" through the newsletters. The way our meetings are held steers us towards sharing...and so should our newsletter. Not everyone in our group knows everything. Each of us knows something that another member does not. Someone somewhere may know something that we do not. Many of you would be surprised to find that the solution to a problem you are having has already been discovered by another user (in Florida, New Jersey, Cincinnati, or Connecticut, etc.) and the answer was printed in his group's newsletter. Just taking a few minutes after the meeting to read the newsletters of the other users groups in our exchange program could have saved you possibly hours of trying to solve your problem. In this issue of USERS' NEWS is a partial index of articles and items from our exchange newsletters. The second part of this list will be published in next month's newsletter, and an update will be published in each newsletter thereafter. Reading over the index will give you an idea of what other users are doing and it takes just a few minutes of reading the article that interests you in another newsletter after the next meeting.

Another point in regard to our newsletter: I know many of you are tired of hearing me harp about submissions for USERS' NEWS. To those who have been a great help and submitted, I extend a hearty THANK YOU! To those who have yet to submit something, USERS' NEWS needs you. Going over the other user groups' newsletters this month I realized we are lucky. More than 60% of another group's newsletter was comprised of reprints from other user group newsletters. I think that sometimes an article from another newsletter is important enough to share with our members by reprinting the article in our newsletter; however, I do feel that if a group's newsletter cannot put together enough material (whether from submissions or just honest-to-goodness reporting) to make it 90% local and 10% (or less) reprints, than that newsletter should take a hard look at itself. The newsletter should not only be FOR the membership, but also FROM the membership. The newsletter should make the members feel they want to share their knowledge, experiences and items of general interest. I am sure many of you feel that a lot of USERS' NEWS does not interest you; however, if an article or item interests or helps just a few of our members, then it has served its purpose. A good part of the items in our newsletter are original submissions from our membership. It is a shame to look at 3 newsletters from 3 users groups who are separated by hundreds of miles and find that some of the articles are the same in all 3.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS BOIL DOWN TO? Unless you want USERS' NEWS to be comprised of more material from other users groups than from 80-COMPUTER USERS OF HOUSTON, then SUBMIT SOMETHING! It doesn't hurt. Fifteen minutes of your time used to prepare something for USERS' NEWS can keep USERS' NEWS as the newsletter published BY and FOR 80-COMPUTER USERS OF HOUSTON!

We must not forget the 40% of our membership who cannot attend each of our meetings. USERS' NEWS keeps them informed and helps them the same as if they had attended the last meeting. Because of this 40%, those presenting a program at a meeting should also take a few extra minutes to prepare a short summary of their program for publication in USERS' NEWS so that those who miss the program at the meeting can have the benefit of the program through USERS' NEWS.





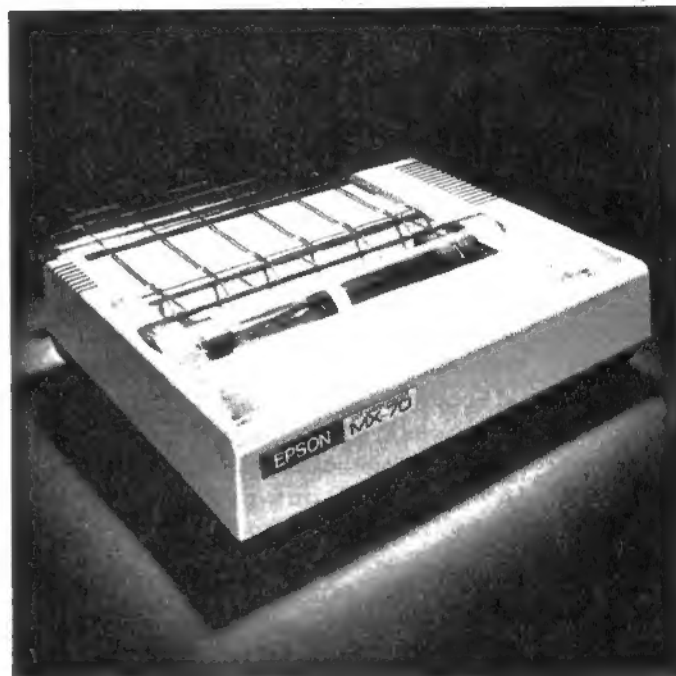
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